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USE OF UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES IN LEBANON

COMMUNICATION

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

TRANSMITTING

A REPORT ON THE USE OF UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES TO FACILITATE THE WITHDRAWAL OF PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION PERSONNEL FROM LEBANON, PURSUANT TO THE WAR POWERS RESOLUTION OF 1973 (PUBLIC LAW 93-148)

SEPTEMBER 8, 1982.—Referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 24, 1982

Dear Mr. Speaker:

On August 18, 1982, the Government of Lebanon established a plan for the departure from Lebanon of the Palestine Liberation Organization leadership, offices, and combatants in Beirut. This plan has been accepted by the Government of Israel. The Palestine Liberation Organization has informed the Government of Lebanon that it also has accepted the plan. A key element of this plan is the need for a multinational force, including a United States component, to assist the Government of Lebanon in carrying out its responsibilities concerning the withdrawal of these personnel under safe and orderly conditions. This will facilitate the restoration of Lebanese Government sovereignty and authority over the Beirut area.

In response to the formal request of the Government of Lebanon, and in view of the requirement for such a force in order to secure the acceptance by concerned parties of the departure plan, I have authorized the Armed Forces of the United States to participate on a limited and temporary basis. In accordance with my desire that the Congress be fully informed on this matter, and consistent with the War Powers Resolution, I am hereby providing a report on the deployment and mission of these members of the United States Armed Forces.

On August 21, in accordance with the departure plan, approximately 350 French military personnel--the advance elements of the multinational force--were deployed in Beirut together with elements of the Lebanese Armed Forces, and the departure of Palestinian personnel began. To date, Palestinian personnel have departed Lebanon in accordance with the terms of the plan.

On August 25, approximately 800 U.S. Marines began to arrive in Beirut. These troops are equipped with weapons consistent with their non-combat mission, including usual infantry weapons.

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Under our agreement with the Government of Lebanon, these U.S. military personnel will assist the Government of Lebanon in carrying out its responsibilities concerning the withdrawal of Palestinian personnel under safe and orderly conditions. The presence of our forces will in this way facilitate the restoration of Lebanese Government sovereignty and authority in the Beirut area. Our forces will operate in close coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces, which will have 2500-3500 personnel assigned to this operation, as well as with a total of approximately 800 French and 400 Italian military personnel in the multinational force. Transportation of the personnel departing is being carried out by commercial air and sea transport, and by land. According to our agreement with the Government of Lebanon, the United States military personnel will be withdrawn from Lebanon within thirty days.

I want to emphasize that there is no intention or expectation that U.S. Armed Forces will become involved in hostilities. They are in Lebanon at the formal request of the Government of Lebanon. Our agreement with the Government of Lebanon expressly rules out any combat responsibilities for the U.S. forces. All armed elements in the area have given assurances that they will take no action to interfere with the implementation of the departure plan or the activities of the multinational force. (The departure has been underway for some days now, and thus far these assurances have been fulfilled.) Finally, the departure plan makes it clear that in the event of a breakdown in its implementation, the multinational force will be withdrawn. Although we cannot rule out isolated acts of violence, all appropriate precautions have thus been taken to assure the safety of U.S. military personnel during their brief assignment to Lebanon.

This deployment of the United States Armed Forces to Lebanon is being undertaken pursuant to the President's constitutional authority with respect to the conduct of foreign relations and as Commander-in-Chief of the United States Armed Forces.

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This step will not, by itself, resolve the situation in Lebanon, let alone the problems which have plagued the region for more than thirty years. But I believe that it will improve the prospects for realizing our objectives in Lebanon:

-- a permanent cessation of hostilities;

-- establishment of a strong, representative central government;

-- withdrawal of all foreign forces;

-- restoration of control by the Lebanese Government throughout the country; and

-- establishment of conditions under which Lebanon no longer can be used as a launching point for attacks against Israel.

I also believe that progress on the Lebanon problem will contribute to an atmosphere in the region necessary for progress towards the establishment of a comprehensive peace in the region under Camp David, based firmly on U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

The Honorable Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr.
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

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